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# U.S. agent details web woven by Soviet spies

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It all began with a game of chess in a Bangkok bar.

That's how a U.S. Army sergeant met the Soviet diplomat who would draw him into an intricate spy network spanning four continents.

The American sergeant testifying before a Senate panel yesterday, said the intelligence-collecting capabilities of the Soviet Union are pervasive, broadly based and aimed at U.S. military personnel at home and abroad.

"People must know it's not a spy novel or a James Bond movie world we live in today," he said. "It's a real world."

Speaking behind a panel of frosted glass to protect his identity, and flanked by two U.S. Capitol guards, "Sgt. Smith" told in minute detail how the Soviet diplomat, known to him as "Tori," slowly and cautiously felt out his weaknesses under the guise of friendship.

But Sgt. Smith, unknown to the diplomat and other KGB agents he later encountered, was a double agent working for U.S. counterintelligence.

The KGB agent supplied the beer at their first private get-together outside the chess club and asked apparently innocuous questions about where he worked, if he were

married, and other information new acquaintances share.

The courting continued for some months, Sgt. Smith said, and the KGB agent footed the bill for many dinners and, on several occasions, trips to brothels.

Almost hesitantly, Tori one day told Sgt. Smith that a military phone book from his unit would be of use to him.

He was paid several hundred dollars for the book. That was the beginning of a 10-year relationship with KGB agents. For information he passed on he was paid generously — some \$25,000.

For a while he was asked only to provide non-classified materials, he said. Later he was provided with cameras concealed in a notebook and in a briefcase with which he would record secret information to be left at "dead drops" for Soviet agents.

"I don't think I would've been caught unless I made a mistake," Sgt. Smith told members of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations on Federal Government Security Clearance Programs in the first of three hearings this week.

He said he might have been more likely to make a mistake because of psychological pressure if he had not been working as a double agent. Guilt, he said, might have led to a

breakdown or a confession.

His contacts with the KGB continued when Sgt. Smith was assigned to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. He would travel to New York on the second Saturday of each month to meet KGB agent "Bob." There he signaled from a phone booth near the America Stock Exchange Restaurant on Greenwich Street by using the phone for one minute.

"Dead drops," or hiding places, were arranged in a churchyard cemetery near Fayetteville, Tenn., after Sgt. Smith told Bob of his worries about repeated travel to New York City.

The KGB, through Bob and Tori, also arranged to leave messages with Sgt. Smith's father in Buffalo, N.Y., in case they needed to reach him in an emergency.

The Soviets traced Sgt. Smith when he was assigned to Germany, and a new agent, "Boris," became his German contact.

When Sgt. Smith was assigned to the U.S. Readiness Command in Tampa, Fla., Boris arranged a trip to Mexico City for him so he could meet a new KGB agent.

"The Soviet goal, as always, was for me to acquire for them the most potentially damaging classified defense information possible."

Sgt. Smith said the Soviets didn't hesitate to ask for his help when he moved and was no longer in contact with his friend Tori because "at some unspoken point, you're theirs. You know you're theirs. They know you're theirs, and you're in business."

— Rita McWilliams